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Abstract:

The student was the main focus in chapter two of Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe's book, Understanding by Design. There were two major concepts that seemed to stick out to our class; one being variance, and the other being student-teacher relationships. As a teacher you must be ready for anything (which I think many of us got the chance to truly experience while we were in the schools over the past 3-4 weeks). The flow of a class can take a turn at any moment, some classes have a higher risk than others of doing so. It is important for a teacher to be open to individual learning styles, noticing students' behavior and possible changes in their usual behavior, or a student struggling or excelling. Every student is unique in every way, this includes learning style and behavioral patterns (can't learn vs. won't learn),

and it is up to teachers to notice and find a means to fix any problems their classroom faces, whether it be on an individual scale or involving the whole class. In order to fully benefit your students with this variance you must get to know each of them. Just looking at a student, for the most part, will not give you enough information about what their home life or school life is like. Some student's can do an exceptional job hiding their true feelings, whether they are good or bad feelings. Some students may have learning disabilities which can affect them in many ways, academically, physically, socially, etc. We, as teachers, must do everything possible to get to know and understand our students, this is the foundation for teaching them.

Synthesis:

Our main interest seems to be wanting to connect with students. We know that we will have students coming into our classrooms who will already have the mindset of failure. We, as educators, know that every student has the ability to learn, and deserves the opportunity to do so. Some students just may need a little more instruction or time, some students may need you to make a connection to something else they really enjoy to see the relevance, but every student has this potential to understand. We must learn how to create

[positive relationships](#) with *all* of our students; once this happens, we will be able to teach each student on an individual level. Need some help coming up with some [strategies and other tips](#) on how to get to know your students better or create individual based learning? Surprisingly pinterest has a lot of creative ideas that have worked for other teachers and students. I think we can all agree that it is important to have a plan, as well as a back up plan, because things may not always go the way you have planned them to go, the "strategies and other tips" link can be very helpful if you actually look through some of the ideas posted!

Cole

Chapter Two

Variance of the student body and the resulting need for specific attention to individual learning styles is, largely, what crafts the art of teaching in the first place. Without students and their willingness to learn, and to learn on purpose, we would have few means of knowing how best to instruct and help develop such students. As teachers, though, it also imperative we learn the difference between students who do not want to learn, and students who are inhibited from doing so for any number of reasons.

Many students enter a classroom with few expectations, and an understanding that they may not master the content. As such, it is, likely, not uncommon for students to be disinterested or, moreover, not want to be there at all. How, then, can we best discourage such distaste for curricula and better cater learning to the individual? We must develop constantly better curricula. We must, as teachers, find flaw with ourselves, and that can be most apparent in student reflection. Once we've done that, and recognized that the classroom is always growing and adapting, we can begin to make the environment more accommodating, more friendly, and more conducive to learning.

Cheyenne

I suspect this chapter is for 1. I am with a student. However, I think I have forgotten what being a student in middle and high school was like. Being a college student is very different from being a student in grades 6-12 and that may be because I'm just a different student, we are all considered adults. I had two favorite quotes from this chapter that will impact me and my classroom. The first is, "Each year, students' resilience for those teachers that the journey is not an endless one and that the best of the best teachers are just that—great, subject to change." I agree with this 100%, it is a journey for both the teacher and the students. I will be reading my class, and it seems they will need help by teaching me things I did not know about myself. The second quote is, "Learning happens within students, not to them." This really made me think. I agree with this totally, but I got to thinking about how to actually get students to learn, they must want to learn. I would say most students in high school are there because they have to be, and although I find it difficult to be teaching, there will be students who inspire my classroom. It is my job to make everyone love math at least half as much as I do, so that they will want to know more and the learning will come from within.

Matt

Chapter Two:

This chapter describes how students should be every teachers central concern. Students come in many shapes and forms. All students will read, write, do math, question, learn, and even act in so many different ways. This fact can sound terrifying and difficult to deal with for a new teacher. The chapter goes on to say that this is very difficult for all teachers. There is not a one step (easy fix) process and there is no set in stone guidelines to satisfying the needs of all students. It all comes down to teachers having to make changes and adjustments to make things possible. This could mean developing your instruction that caters to several students' needs.

Chapter two has given me more than just knowledge; it has also provided me with solutions and relevant examples to help me connect with a wide array of students in the classroom. From the start of this chapter I have been thinking back to our learning styles activity, we did in our last class. I feel that I will use that activity in my classroom some day. It is a great way to allow students to find themselves as a learned, but also see that everyone learns differently. Another thing I took from this chapter was the way in which the authors talked about ways to familiarize yourself with students. I always worry about getting to know every student well enough, so this chapter really helped me with ways to make that process easier.

Christopher

Chapter 2 critical point is the point of teaching both high and low level students in the same classroom. The teacher should not teach to the individual but group similar student needs together and make them as a collective. I think the section on teaching to the high and struggling. I find that strategy is a form of trickle-down economics for education. By explaining what is expected and setting the bar high, the teacher can work with students to build themselves up to that level while challenging the high performing students. This section also talks about encouraging optimal group work in the classroom. I agree that students given the option of working with partners or alone can incorporate some of the diversity of learning styles. However, I am worried that students would take advantage of the system and use their partner for free answers. One section talks about six different ways that teachers should attend to in order to foster student success. For me personally, learning profiles and student background would be harder for me to incorporate or meet the most work. Through the responsibility for teachers to understand and look out for students' background has been explained. I finders clearly on section of privacy for me.

Michael

Reading reflection integrating differentiated instruction chapter 2

The goal of chapter two made a point that it was important to teach responsively. To teach responsively is to teach with differentiation. The chapter outlines many points that lead to the success of students in the classroom and how they can get the most out of the learning situation regardless of their learning style. The chapter makes a very valid point that teacher-student relationships and regularly attending to them foster an environment that the student wants to learn from that teacher. The chapter talks about attending to the learning environment and from what I gather it is demonstrating the necessity of positive reinforcement as it helps the students remain positive and accept both their success and failures as normal. It is also important to know and work with the students background as it provides an easier outlet to talk to and help the students. There is an emphasis on the fact that work must be adjusted so that genuine learning is seen across the whole classroom. In order to foster genuine learning the work must be a little more difficult than the individual students can do but this can be conquered with good support. We

must also make an attempt to appeal to all students interests as well. This is also important to show how the content are may connect with their interest areas. We must also allow students to learn in their own way. Letting them learn in their own way gives them an outlet because we as teachers are not forcing information in a single way on them.

Ashley Godbout

One important aspect to take away from this chapter is that as a teacher you never know what else is going on in a student's life. You don't know their history, family life, and home life. Being mindful of why a student is presenting a certain behavior is very important because most likely once the underlying problem is addressed, the student can receive the attention they need. The book reads, "more students would be successful in school if we understood it to be our jobs to craft circumstances that lead to success rather than letting circumstance take it's course." This comes from the fact that teachers often classify students as "successful" if we see their qualities and learning styles alike with ours or "unsuccessful" if opposite. I never thought of this as a problem but I think it is done subconsciously. Once a student is thought of as unsuccessful, the teacher is probably less likely to be proactive and act on the situation. This chapter emphasized fostering a positive teacher-student relationship and that the outcome will be more motivation to learn. Knowing they are valued and respected by their teacher is important to their energy and willingness to learn. One idea this book suggests that Dr. Theresa's does too is having students write in a journal to the teacher. This is a great idea to help strengthen this student-teacher relationship and shows students their teacher cares about them. It's also a way to reflect on how the week went, what struggles they faced in class or outside of class, and how to they hope to improve next week. I'm definitely using this tool in my classroom.

Russell Warren

As we learned in the first chapter, teaching is not just about the educator relaying information as a supreme ruler over the class. In reality, there should be a joining effort between the students and teacher, and the focus should be based on the work itself and the variations in the students receiving said information. Through my experience as a tutor in a middle school, I quickly realized that there are, much of the time, variables that lies outside the realm of the classroom but affect students just as greatly. It's a difficult battle, but as Tomlinson and McTighe write, "the optimism of teaching [is] that if we keep trying, we will find a way to address the problems that, in the meantime, obstruct learner success" (p. 15). I agree with this sentiment: The success of the teacher does not come from how well her students grade on the SAT, or how many facts he can explain in an hour, but how well they respond to a problem and how well they adapt for when it happens again. The act of educating is one where teachers must react to their students, and allow for extreme variability to ensure student success, which, in turn, creates teacher success. "Education is about learning," Tomlinson and McTighe explain, "Learning happens within students, not to them" (p. 22). There must be a constant conversation between the content, the instruction, the students, and the teacher.

Devin Boilard

Chapter Two: What Really Matters in Teaching? (The Students)

While the previous chapter gave me some anxiety into the tasks required of teachers this chapter offered me reassurance that the feat was not impossible to accomplish. It was the specific real-life examples incorporated into the chapter that offered me this breath of fresh air. Examples of barriers I might come across, and coinciding examples of how they might play-out, showed me the possibility and ease in which a teacher might try to counter certain obstacles.

I think this chapter does well to express the importance of flexibility when it comes to our curriculum and methods of approach. As a teacher we will need to mold our curriculum to each of our students accordingly, what seems like a solid game plan at the start of the school year might turn out not to be a suitable approach. Teachers must not be married to these previously orchestrated plans but rather be able to accept their need to be fluid.

Lastly one of the more minor points of the chapter that stood out to me was the need to incorporate DI for those who are gifted in your specific field. I think the talk of DI is often directed towards those who possess traits that might act as an anchor. My classroom will also be present with individuals who already have knowledge of the subject I am teaching and I must work hard to plan lessons that still intrigue and interest them without overwhelming those who enter with zero background knowledge.

Ashley Libby

This chapter really deals with the diversity of each student. It tells how every student learns differently and responds to lessons differently. It tells many stories of students and how the teacher either helped or was unsuccessful in their many methods. It says that the student is the focal point and we must make sure that they are getting everything they can out of their experience and to help them along the way if they are having trouble. As a student assistant, I know how hard it can be to identify the problem a student is having and why their grades are dropping. I have had to motivate students in many different ways to try and get their grades to improve and communication was a key element in that process. This chapter points out the communication between the student, the teacher, the parents, and even the principals. It points out some of the main steps that we as teacher must take in order to become a responsive teacher. It is important to remember that being responsive does not mean that we will be able to understand the needs of every single student because that is next to impossible.

As a teacher I must make sure that I can communicate properly with my students so that I can understand why they may be having trouble and how to help them. As a student assistant, we all came up with four basic steps to help students. Step one is to explore the problem. Step two is to understand why it is happening. Step three is to plan on how we can fix the problem and step four is to implement the plan into action. This can be used almost with any situation and can be changed and vary depending on student and teacher situation. I need to make sure that I have some type of plan on how to deal with students that are struggling and need my help and encouragement socially and academically.

Tyler Michaud

The second chapter of *Integrating Differentiated Instruction + Understanding by Design*, by Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe, focused on the importance of developing an awareness for the learning styles of every students as a basis for teaching responsibly. Teaching responsibly means having an acute awareness of the learning needs of the students and incorporating it into your curriculum. If the teacher successfully applies this knowledge, the students will benefit in several ways: Attending to the

teacher-student relationship will contribute to the students enthusiasm for learning, attending to the environment will build a context for learning, attending to a students' backgrounds and needs creates bonds between the learner and the content, attending to the readiness of the students permits academic growth, attending to interests enlists student motivation, and attending to the learning profiles of the students enables efficiency of learning.

Getting to know your students can be helpful in several ways. Creating a comfortable classroom, that is open to self expression, is essential. Doing so also gives the teacher a feel for the student; knowing someone's background, such as where they live, the types of schools they have attended, and their interests, can help a teacher create differentiated lessons for that student. Knowing your student's, and them knowing you in turn, gives them more reasons to show you respect and trust you and what you are teaching them. Basically, differentiated instruction is impossible without getting to know your students.

Tyler Brown

This chapter deals with understanding that beyond teaching to different learning styles and to students of different backgrounds, ethnicities, and socio-economic statuses, there are indeed other variables that can become a larger barrier to student learning and may be even harder to detect. For example; the chapter tells the story of a student named Elise, a girl who had previously gotten consistent good grades until she suddenly dropped off and started failing her classes. Her teachers were perplexed when trying to understand what they were doing wrong. In the end, it becomes known that it was not an act by the teachers that led to her sudden collapse in academics, but her own endeavor to purposefully fail classes in order to provide a reason for her parents to talk to one another again since they had recently separated. What we can take out of this is that beyond developing a masterful curriculum and understanding how to teach to a multitude of learners of different backgrounds, teachers must not forget that what really matters in teaching is getting to know the students on a personal level and becoming their guide toward autonomy and understanding the world that they are being raised in. Personal circumstances are not only common in a student's life, but unpredictable, hard to detect, and sometimes even harder to overcome. In the example of Elise, it seems near impossible to devise a strategy to get her academics in order when her first and foremost concern is to reunite her parents.

Meghan

Chapter 2

As I expected, my learning will not cease once I become a teacher. As a future teacher I will constantly be faced with new situations, and I will have to deal with all of these situations in the most professional way possible. In order to be a successful teacher, I will need to continually "seek a deeper understanding of the essence of the subject" (12), and must constantly delve deeper into my understanding of what will help my students to learn. Although a lot of education has been focused on meeting certain standards, it should not be lost on us that helping the students to learn is the main purpose of teaching. It is important to create a solid relationship with all students to not hinder their ability to learn. As a teacher, I will face several diversities in each classroom. It is important to not lose sight of the importance of teaching in order to appease any struggle a student might be facing. It is important that curriculum and a strong relationship both play a role in the success a student has in class.

Focusing on relationships and the environment in which students learn will help them to be successful in school. Understanding challenges and differences among students is known as Responsive Teaching. In

order to do this successfully, I will need to focus on the needs and requirements of any students I have in class. This can include learning differences as well as any sort of outside personal factors.